

Rap: Another Tool in the Battle With Drunk Driving

By JO2(SW) Jerry Foltz,
USS *George Washington* (CVN-73)

The Navy often relies on training videos and directives on serious topics to help keep personnel from harm's way. One of those messages deals with the avoidable catastrophe of drinking and driving. But one thing these training media fail to provide is personality and a fresh appeal to young Sailors.

How do you get such a strong point to a Sailor in a way that has not been done already, or to reach a new market and give the same message a new life?

USS *George Washington's* Chief Culinary Specialist (SW/AW) Brian Ware may have just what the doctor or, in this case, commanding officer, ordered. Ware utilized his personal hobby of rapping to create a lyrical message of inspiration and consequences that a young audience can feel and respect. Called "T-B-Y-D" (Think B4 U Drink), the song urges Sailors not to risk their lives with the needless vehicular tragedies related to drunk driving.

Ware wrote the song in 1996 as an MS2, after learning of fellow shipmates who were involved in drunk-driving incidents while stationed in Hawaii. Four years later, the song was released on a private CD called "B. Ware 'Coming at Ya'."

Ware was watching SITE-TV training on responsible driving when he thought, "What better way to get that message across than through my song?"

A few days later, *GW's* commanding officer, Capt. Garry R. White, was holding a televised Captain's Call when he said, "Drastic measures are needed—if anyone has some ideas, present them to me."

Those two words—"drastic measures"—were all it took for Ware to set his idea in motion. With the help of shipmates, he created a special CD and made enough copies for all hands to take one with them as they departed the quarterdeck after arriving home for the holidays. Each crew member also took along a *GW* "Safe Cab Card," which lists the phone numbers of cab companies in the Hampton

Roads area Sailors can call when they've been drinking.

Another Sailor who's looking out for the interests of young shipmates today is AO3 Jesse Wallen of HS-6 at NAS North Island. Here's what Derek Nelson, executive assistant of the Communications and Marketing Department at the Naval Safety Center recently wrote.—Ed.

Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class Jesse Wallen had been to plenty of safety stand-downs by the time he started wondering, "Why do these things have to be so boring?"

It wasn't that the topics covered were unimportant, or that the information being passed wasn't useful. It was just that the media was stale and repetitive. Maybe it was a lecture by a speaker who wasn't very dynamic, or maybe the video being shown was outdated. Wallen saw an opportunity to do something original—with music.

"I wanted to make it a little more exciting," he recalls. "So after one of our stand-downs, a buddy and I got on stage and did a little rap. Usually, after a stand-down, people are in a hurry to leave, but they were staying around to listen. I thought, 'Hmm, maybe I've got something here.'" He bounced the idea off the squadron safety officer and the skipper and got their support.

The result is "It's All Over Now," which deals with car wrecks (the leading killer of Sailors and Marines) and handguns. The song would fit right in on MTV. The subject matter is violent: preventable mishaps that claim the lives of so many shipmates every year. These mishaps, he writes, force the Navy to "be wasting so much money on funeral after funeral after funeral." ■

To download or listen to "It's All Over Now," or to get a copy of the CD, visit www.safetycenter.navy.mil/articles/allovernow.htm.